

Planning Commission of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 11, 2023
6:30 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Michael Link called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Other Commissioners in attendance were Scott Ritenour, Kenneth Hamner, Mitzi Johnston, and Felicia Reeves. Planning and Development Director Robin Cailloux, Senior Planner Lora Hooks, and IT Specialists Stephen Shelton and Caleb Thompson.

Additions or Deletions

None

Announcements and Reports

Link announced this would be his final Planning Commission meeting after serving seven years. He thanked Staff and his fellow Commissioners, saying he had learned a great deal and hoped to serve in other volunteer capacities for the City in the future. The Commission would elect a new chair at its next meeting, he remarked. Ritenour thanked him for his leadership.

Approval of Minutes

1. Planning Commission Meeting August 14, 2023

Ritenour moved to approve the August 14, 2023, Planning Commission meeting minutes. Johnston seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing

1. PH-23-06 Rezone 2011 and 1999 Highway 54 W from OI Office Institutional to GC General Commercial

Cailloux explained that these two properties were owned separately, but were seeking to be rezoned as a single parcel. She pointed out the location in the northeast part of the City between SR 54 and Sumner Road. The property was zoned Office-Institutional (O-I), along with adjacent parcels when annexed into the City 2013. There were a multitude of conditions put on those properties, including that there be no vehicular access to Sumner Road.

The property was within the village center, and its Future Land Use (FLU) was for Office. The Comprehensive Plan indicated commercial, mixed-use, office, and multi-family residential uses were appropriate land uses within a village center. However, Cailloux said she wanted to explain the concept of land use intensity, which called for the most intense uses, such as commercial and mixed-use, at the village center, then stepping down to office and on to multi-family, then to single-family subdivisions. This was a way to buffer less dense residential from the high intensity uses. That was why the FLU called for Office—this property was just across Sumner Road from single-family homes.

The applicant was requesting to rezone to General Commercial (GC) for the purpose of building a car wash. However, unless there was a condition put on the rezoning that restricted it to this use only, the GC zoning would open it up to any type of commercial use.

Based on this, Cailloux said Staff was of the opinion that the request did not meet a majority of the criteria for rezoning and did not recommend approval. However, if the Planning Commission did decide to recommend approval to the City Council, Staff suggested they add a condition prohibiting access to Sumner Road and another that required a 25-foot undisturbed landscape buffer along Sumner, which might require additional evergreen plantings.

Attorney Steven Jones represented the applicant, and he was accompanied by local homebuilder Chad Floyd, former John's Creek mayor turned consultant Mike Bodker, and Foamworks' Jason Blinco. Floyd's parents were present, as well as the Palettas, who owned the property.

Jones said Foamworks was called an auto spa because it offered cutting-edge mechanicals, high-quality products, and top-notch technicians. He said Blinco would talk about community involvement and hiring practices.

He noted that these properties were zoned O-I when annexed a decade ago, and since then, Paletta and the property owner to the north, Cliff Bost, had actively marketed them, but had no interest except for auto-related uses, predominantly car washes. Jones explained that they considered whether the property had an economically-viable use as zoned, and, with the exceptions of Bost's and Paletta's personal offices, the market had not tendered any other viable use.

This was an automobile-oriented node, Jones continued, noting the presence of Mavis Discount Tire, Advance Auto Parts, and a detailing shop in the vicinity. He said the zoning map showed a trend for GC up and down SR 54, and the O-I was a bit of an outlier or spot zoning.

This strangely-shaped tract was difficult to develop for anything, Jones noted, presenting a conceptual plan that showed how the car wash would fit on the lot. There would be no driveway to Sumner, he pointed out, and they wanted a planted buffer along Sumner Road. He said they believed an undisturbed buffer as Staff had requested would not be sufficient, and they wanted to plant it with a staggered double row of evergreens and to put up a privacy fence. However, the buffer needed to be 20 feet to make the lot work, and Staff had recommended 25 feet. Renderings showed the building near the front of the site and detailing stations to the rear.

Jones ended his presentation, and Link asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of the rezoning.

Blinco explained he was in charge of operations for all the Foamworks in the Atlanta area. He said this business would provide jobs for local people. He added that part of his job was to make sure each Foamworks was kept clean, and they pressure washed the site every night. They helped raise funds for local schools and were active in the Chamber of Commerce. Foamworks did not play or condone loud music, and the vacuums were not noisy. They recycled 90% of the water used in washing through a closed reclamation system.

Matthew Dalke said he lived in Smokerise Corners and would welcome a car wash in this area. He noted that people looked for amenities such as this when considering moving to the city.

Joe Paletta said he bought the 2011 property in 2008 and put it on the market seven or eight years ago with the other owners, thinking it was a great development strip. The original homes on those properties needed to be redone or demolished for new development. It would be great if they could put another office building there, but since COVID, demand for office space has been almost non-existent. There had been four offers on the property, all automotive related and similar to the existing businesses in the area. As one of the first things someone saw when coming into Peachtree City, this property should be developed to be better looking, he continued, but said they were not going to put money into it when it should be re-developed as something else.

Bodker reflected on his time making zoning decisions as Mayor of John's Creek, saying now he could choose his clients now, and he was proud to work with Foamworks. It would be tastefully done, and he said he was sure they could work together to deal with any concerns. He said he represented them in Alpharetta, which had extremely high standards, and they were happy to welcome Foamworks. Land use plans were important, but if all they were going to do was follow the plan, there was no use in having zoning hearings. Bodker said this was a project worthy of consideration.

Link asked those in opposition to speak.

Regina Pitstick of Wellborn Road said the car wash would be visible from her property. They moved to Peachtree City a few years ago and appreciated the green space and that her neighborhood had been there 20 or 30 years surrounded by woods. She noted that Sumner Road was residential, with a new development of homes going in now. Traffic and noise were a concern, and she did not like the idea that this would be on septic because of the possibility of flooding. She said this car wash would reduce area property values and quality of life. As far as helping the community, she noted that only eight jobs would be created. She did not feel that a car wash would be in keeping with the character of this area.

Jill Jensen, a Wellborn Estates resident for 22 years, did not want a Mayor from

John's Creek advising Peachtree City. She said she agreed that this request did not meet the requirements for a rezoning. She said three neighborhoods had been added to Sumner Road in the time she had lived there, and there was still no cart path. The car wash would add to traffic problems at the intersection of Sumner and SR 54, she remarked. There had always been water pressure problems in this area, Jensen remarked. She said there were 14 car washes within six miles, not counting mobile detailers. There was a reason this was zoned O-I, and a reason people had built homes along this quiet road. She said many residents would be willing to sign a petition against this.

John Pitstick said a car wash was not a great welcoming statement to Peachtree City. He remarked that the applicant had misstated the use of surrounding property. There was a neighborhood listed as GC that was actually single-family.

Raymond Liotta of Braelinn Village stepped up to say he felt this would be a nuisance to the surrounding neighborhoods, and that an additional noise barrier might be needed. He wondered about the days and hours of operations. He noted the 13 conditions set on this property when it was annexed and zoned, saying all should be considered if this property was rezoned. He asked Cailloux about the conditions for the zoning change that were not met, and Link said they could address that later.

There were no others who wished to speak, and Link closed the public hearing.

Hamner asked about the reasons Staff was not recommending the rezoning. Cailloux replied that they relied on the Comprehensive Plan, which included the FLU map as well as policies and concepts. There was a concept that said commercial, office, and high-density residential were appropriate uses in a village center, as this was. On the other hand, she went on, there was the step-down intensity land use model that the village center concept was based on. Here, the village center had been stretched out along SR54 and sandwiched into an area that already had low-density residential. There should be some stepping down, and that was why the FLU showed O-I there and not Commercial. Staff felt that was a very significant impact on this request.

So City Staff did not feel it followed the village center concept from a step-down perspective? Hamner inquired. Cailloux said that was correct.

He asked Jones to clarify his comments about the buffer. Jones said they were talking about a 20-foot buffer, which complied with the zoning ordinance. In that 20 feet, they wanted to plant a double row of evergreens and erect a privacy fence on the other side to provide an auditory and visual buffer. He went on to explain that the vacuums were not loud because the producers that made noise were enclosed in a way that reduced noise levels down to that of a normal conversation.

Cailloux noted they were not asking for a variance for the buffer, so they would

have to comply with the ordinance. Jones said a 25-foot buffer would just make it too tight on that property. He said the conceptual plan complied with all the dimensions in the ordinance. Jones said he understood they could reduce the front setback, but that would take a separate request at another time. Cailloux said it would come up when the conceptual site plan was reviewed, and the Planning Commission could reduce the front buffer from 60 to 40 feet, but they would have to plant 20% more trees on other parts of the property. Jones said they could add the five feet for a buffer, but would have to make it up on the front side.

Ritenour asked if this was part of any overlay district on SR 54? It was not, Cailloux stated. Ritenour asked if they were looking to put one in place, as they had on the western side of SR 54? He mentioned the proposed revitalization of the Governor's Walk area.

There were architectural design guidelines on the west side that were above and beyond the City's guidelines, Cailloux pointed out, and Council had discussed creating guidelines for this area, but it currently was not funded.

When the auto parts store was built, they required it to match the existing style and colors in the Publix area, Ritenour remarked. He thought this should tie into the new paint scheme at Governor's Walk. Could they put those restrictions here? City Council could impose conditions that included architectural requirements. He asked how La Tonique Juicery, which moved across the street from Governor's Walk to this area, was incorporated into an O-I district? Cailloux said it was unusual, but Peachtree City allowed sit-down restaurants smaller than 6,000 square feet in an Office district.

If someone shoehorned an office building on this property, Ritenour asked, could it be two stories, like the nearby Piedmont medical offices? In theory, yes, Cailloux responded, but the only office use they were seeing growth in was medical, and the parking requirements for medical offices far exceeded the City's standards. They might have to go to a deck situation, but those were \$60,000 to \$70,000 per parking spot.

Ritenour asked Jones if they would be willing to alter to color scheme to match the character of the area? Jones said they had done this in other areas, and it shouldn't be a problem. They wanted to have that dialogue and come up with a building that fit in.

Johnston had a question about access from Sumner Road, and Cailloux again said Staff proposed adding a condition that all access and egress to the car wash be from SR 54. What were the operating hours? Johnston asked, and Jones said 8 to 8, seven days a week.

She asked what studies they had done that showed a car wash would be successful in this location? Foamworks did pro formas on every site, Jones replied,

adding this site was interesting because there was no car wash in this area of the city. They had done traffic counts as well, Jones said, and were confident in the viability of this store. He said a fair amount of customers at a car wash were passersby, but even more were people who lived in the area. It was not a destination, so he called it more of a traffic puller than a traffic generator.

Reeves said she believed the Commission had recently approved a car wash and asked Cailloux if she recalled that. Cailloux said the newest car wash was on property already zoned GC at the intersection of Huddleston and SR 54 West. Reeves asked Cailloux to point out Huddleston Road.

People were saying there were already 14 car washes in Peachtree City, Reeves remarked; was that an accurate number? Cailloux said she hadn't done a Google search, but there were two that were the automatic wash type that Foamworks was proposing; another combined this with do-it-yourself bays. She knew of two detail stores, and went on to state that she was not sure if there were other car wash businesses in the city.

Did they know how many vehicles went through these car washes each day? Reeves asked, and Cailloux said they could call and ask, but the company might not want it made public. The Institute of Traffic Engineers created traffic counts, and this information was in the meeting packet, that were based on national counts compiled over decades to determine how many trips were created by certain types of businesses. The City had no research like that.

Reeves recalled Blinco said they offered good hourly pay rates; how much were they? He said site leaders started at \$20 per hour, but total pay was based on sales, so pay could range from \$80,000 to \$200,000. A regular attendant started at \$10 an hour with a commission of \$5 per sale, and that could amount to about \$1,000 a month in commissions. Pay increased up to \$12 an hour within a year. Team leaders started at \$12, with raises up to \$13 or \$14. There might be an assistant site leader as well, starting at \$15 to \$17 an hour plus commissions.

How many site leaders were on hand during business hours? Reeves inquired. A site leader was present at least 45 hours a week, Blinco reported, and assistants were there when the site leader was not present in order to ensure the property was maintained to standards. She asked if the hours were the same on Sunday, and Blinco said they were.

It seemed they would have a lot of competition, Reeves noted; what made them different? Could he share projections regarding the number of cars they expected per hour? When would there be the most traffic?

There were a variety of types of car washes, Jones remarked, but Peachtree City had just two that were fully automatic and not attached to a gas station. Those were Caliber and Riptide, both on the other side of town. That was the market

analysis that pushed them there, he commented. Blinco then noted that he lived in Coweta County and grew up in this area. He said the other two car washes were hard to access, and they felt this site would be best for the community. Reeves said she imagined the weekends would be busiest, and Blinco said generally that was true, but Mondays were busier than Sundays. He said they looked at hours, not days, and business usually slowed down around 6 or 7 p.m., but it all depended on the area. He said they wouldn't impede traffic or make traffic worse, because people didn't want to stop on their commutes.

Reeves said she thought noise could be generated from two places: if the car wash played music and if the equipment generated noise. Cailloux noted outdoor speaker systems were not permitted in the GC zoning district, and Blinco said they did not play music.

He explained that the vacuums were enclosed as a way to muffle the noise. Reeves asked what the decibel level was?, and Jones said the volume was that of a normal conversation level.

Noise was a concern of Link's, as well, and he asked if they would be willing to put up a noise barrier? Jones said they probably couldn't put up a wall like those on the Interstate, but what they had found to work was what they had proposed: the double-staggered row of evergreens, the fence, and the vacuum enclosures. Link said he was still concerned about noise in the neighborhood.

They had this discussion in other areas, Bodker added, so they measured the ambient noise along the main roadway, and with the suppressors and the way the tunnel was designed to push the noise back inside with the equipment, the noise was lower than the road noise that was already there. He said he was sure, going by the traffic counts, that would be the case here.

Link asked Cailloux if she had any experience with noise abatement measures such as Foamworks was proposing? Cailloux noted there were no car washes close to residential development anywhere in the city, so she had no direct experience. There was a noise ordinance, and they could not produce over that decibel level on a commercial site. Some types of landscaping bounced noise better than others, she noted, so they could look at that, as well.

Link asked where the water would go? but Jones first went back to noise. The decibel level with the proprietary noise system started at 74 decibels. Normal traffic ran between 75 and 85 decibels.

Regarding water runoff, Jones said they had about 90% water reclamation through tanks underneath the building. The waste water was treated and re-used. Blinco noted there were grates in the floor of the tunnel that the water drained into before going to large holding tanks. He had heard concerns about the smell of recycled water, but they used a system that employed ultraviolet lights and osmosis to get

rid of the smell.

Ritenour asked what was going on at the Bradshaw development on Sumner? Cailloux said work was active on that site.

He said he had looked at the other locations, and only the one in Riverdale seemed close to a residential community, and that was apartments. Were there others? Stockbridge, Blinco said, and Jones noted that there was a retro-fit in Alpharetta directly outside a single-family subdivision. Ritenour said the one in Stockbridge was close to apartments and in a heavy commercial area.

Foamworks seemed to be a great business, Hamner remarked, but he had three concerns when looking at it as a zoning request. He agreed with Cailloux that it did not fit the village concept. It abutted a residential zoning, and that was taken into account when this property was annexed.

Article 1304 of the zoning ordinance said they should consider if a rezoning would adversely affect adjacent uses. Hamner recalled that in September, 2020 there was a zoning request for GC that butted up against a residential area, and it was denied for that reason. Hamner pointed out there were businesses that made this zoning work, such as La Tonique Juicery, which was right beside this property.

Again, he said, Foamworks seemed like a great business, but not on this property, and he could not support this rezoning request.

Ritenour thanked Hamner for mentioning the zoning ordinance. Since moving here in 2013, he remarked, he had seen them go from one major car wash to several in the city. He noted it was up to each business to determine viability and trusted they had done their due diligence.

His concern was the proximity to the residential area. Ritenour said he had looked at their other locations, and most were in very commercialized areas. He was sure this was a good business, but it was not in a good location. There were probably some options for this area that were not commercial. He was not as concerned about traffic because there would be no access to Sumner, and an office building would generate as much traffic, if not more. Ritenour said his opinion was based on the proximity to residential.

Johnston agreed, saying it was a great concept, and a car wash was needed in that part of town, but this was not compatible with the adjacent residential. Reeves said she wouldn't belabor the point, but she, too, considered the application problematic for the reasons already addressed. She agreed with what the residents had to say about noise and traffic.

Link noted that this was a good business, but it did not adhere to the Comprehensive Plan, and he was a stickler for following it. It didn't provide the step

down that the Comp Plan mandated.

Hamner moved to recommend denial of Public Hearing item 23-06, Rezone 2011 and 1999 Highway 54 W from OI, Office Institutional, to GC, General Commercial. Ritenour and Reeves seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Agenda Items

None

New Agenda Items

1. 23-09-01 Building Elevations, Chick-fil-A, 1222 HWY 74 S

This Chick-fil-A was in the Wilshire Pavilion on the south end of town at the intersection of SR 74 South and Holly Grove Road, Hooks explained, and the property was zoned GC. A kitchen renovation would result in a minor building expansion affecting the rear and the west side of the building. She pointed it out on the site plan and presented an elevation of the rear of the building, as well as a photo of its current appearance. There was an elevation of the side of the building, too, and a photo of it as of now.

Chick-fil-A was proposing to update the colors of the building to the company's new standard color palette, also shown. The colors were neutral, Hooks remarked, and very similar to what was currently used, just darker. The brick would remain, with the new brick matching the existing. All the brick in the shopping center was the same color. She noted that there was not as much brick on this building as was typically required along SR 74 because it was approved just prior to the adoption of the current architectural requirements. She showed photos of several other businesses in the shopping center as a color comparison, saying the proposed Chick-fil-A colors were not exactly the same as in the guidelines, but were in the same neutral color family, and Staff believed they would blend well and recommended approval.

Jason Toole of CPH, the architect and engineer for Chick-fil-A, represented the applicant and offered to answer questions. He affirmed they would be painting the stucco part of the building, but it would blend with other businesses in the shopping center.

Johnston asked what was being lost in the rear due to the expansion? There was a service yard there and on the west side, Toole replied, and they would lose that pavement. The reason for this expansion was to streamline the kitchen and gain freezer space and kitchen space for efficiency. Seating inside the building would be slightly reduced, he continued.

This request was related to the following agenda item for landscape plan approval, Ritenour pointed out, recalling they approved an additional drive-thru lane earlier this year. Hooks said the curb line around the building was not changing; only the building footprint was expanding. They would be losing some linear feet of

landscaping because of the dual lanes, he continued, and Hooks said that was correct.

Johnston moved to approve New Agenda item 23-09-01 Building Elevations, Chick-fil-A, 1222 Hwy 74 S. Hamner seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. 23-09-02 Landscape Plan, Chick-fil-A, 1222 HWY 74 S

As discussed, the renovations at the Chick-fil-A on SR 74 South would include continuing the dual-lane drive-thru around the building to improve traffic flow. Hooks showed this on the landscape plan and pointed out the bypass lane and how parking would be shifted.

She reminded the Commission that Council granted a variance in May, 2023, for a buffer reduction along SR 74 and Holly Grove with the stipulation that a new landscape plan be submitted to the Planning Commission. That plan showed that four pine trees would be eliminated along SR 74 and a row of shrubs plus one deciduous tree would be removed from a parking island along the Holly Grove side. They wanted to replace three crape myrtles next to the building with new crape myrtles. Other crape myrtles and trees along the edge of the property would remain.

Hooks went over the new plantings that were proposed, noting they would provide color for the site. The buffer along SR 74 would be supplemented with three new scarlet oaks, which were overstory trees, and four understory trees, three of them dogwoods and a redbud. Azaleas were proposed in front of the retaining wall, which would be pushed out and visible only from the parking lot.

A row of dwarf Burford hollies would screen the parking lot on Holly Grove in keeping with the ordinance requirements for a 24-inch screen. Flowering plants would go around the monument sign. The tree that was removed in the parking island would be replaced, and other parking islands would be planted with trees, shrubs, and groundcovers where there currently were none. A variety of plantings were proposed around the perimeter of the building, Hooks continued, including the new crape myrtles and two Japanese maples.

While five trees and some shrubs would be removed for the site improvements, 14 new trees and a variety of shrubs and groundcovers were proposed for an abundance of new color, and Staff believed the landscape plan met the conditions of the variance and recommended approval.

Toole said they had submitted a revised landscape plan, but the only difference came about when working with engineering staff on the stormwater review. He indicated a spot in the rear where an underground water quality unit would be installed. A tree would be removed, with a new tree planted nearby. Hooks said she didn't realize there was a change, and Toole showed the plan to the Commissioners.

Johnston asked how tall and full the trees along SR 74 would be? They were oaks and dogwoods, along with a redbud, Hooks said. Cailloux said dogwoods thrived in understory conditions and might not grow as full, but grew taller.

At planting, Toole explained, the oaks had to be a minimum three-inch caliper and 10-foot height, and the dogwoods two-inch caliper and seven-foot height. Johnston said she was wondering about the restaurant's visibility from the road, but Toole pointed out that the building sat below the road with a retaining wall in between, so it would be the tree trunks motorists saw, not the foliage.

Johnston, Reeves, and Link said they appreciated the colors.

Hamner moved to approve New Agenda item 23-09-02, Landscape Plan, Chick-fil-A, 1222 Hwy 74 S. Johnston seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Workshop Items

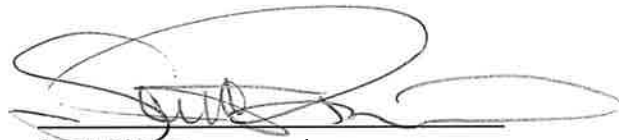
No workshop items.

There would be a meeting on September 25, Cailloux said. Alternate Andrew Kriz would fill Link's spot, and a public hearing was on the agenda.

There being no further business, Link adjourned the meeting at 8:18 p.m.



Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary



Scott Ritenour, Vice Chairman